NPS Form 10-900
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NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

013

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x' in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name The Louis and Celia Skoler Residence

other name/site number

2. Location

street & number 213 Scottholm Terrace ☐ not for publication

city or town Syracuse vicinity

state New York code 036 county Onondaga code 067 zip code 13224

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Robert Pierpont DSHPO 12/16/09
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:
- ☑ entered in the National Register.
  - ☐ See continuation sheet.
- ☐ determined eligible for the National Register
  - ☐ See continuation sheet.
- ☐ determined not eligible for the National Register.
- ☐ removed from the National Register.
- ☐ other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

for Edson H. Beall 2.12.10

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(check as many boxes as apply)

☐ public-local
☒ private
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property
(check only one box)

☐ district
☒ building(s)
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Function
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Single dwelling

Current Function
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Modern

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation poured concrete
walls plywood, poured concrete, glass,brick
roof asphalt and gravel
other

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION:

Scottholm Terrace is located in the 1920s Scottholm subdivision in the eastern section of the City of Syracuse. It extends 2 blocks, from Scottholm Boulevard at its north end to Meadowbrook Drive, at its south. Scottholm Terrace climbs one of the numerous drumlins in the city, which were formed during the ice age, 12-15,000 years ago. The northern block slopes steeply in all four directions. It is heavily wooded between the houses on the east side of the street, and the houses to the east on Crawford Avenue at the foot of the drumlin. The land to the north and east of this house is undeveloped and wooded. Both blocks of Scottholm Terrace have been developed and one and two-story residences line both sides of the street. Most of the house at either end of the street date from the 1920s. The houses nearer the top of the drumlin were constructed later. The Skoler house is located in the northern block on the east side of the street at the crest of the hill. The house was built in 1957 and occupied in early spring of 1958.

The 1900-square-foot house is a long low rectangle oriented parallel to the street. A long redwood fence at street level provides privacy and protection from the west sun. The main floor is at street level, and the bedrooms are located on the lower floor, which takes advantage of the slope to provide a full height window wall facing east. The east wall, at both levels, is post and beam construction with glass in-fill. At the upper level, the west and south sides are of light wood construction mixed with post and beam with glass infill. The north side is glass and brick masonry. At the lower level, the west, north and south sides are reinforced concrete mostly built into the grade.

At the street level there is a main entry nearly centered on the front façade and a secondary entry from the carport. The lower level has two exits at grade. The east edge of each story is wood post and beam construction the full length of the house with fixed glass infill from floor to the lower edge of the beam. Operable windows are full-height jalousies. At the upper level, the north side is fixed glass, glazed sliding door and white brick chimney; parts of the west and south sides are glazed, but white plywood panels occupy most of the surface. The roof is flat and cantilevers 5 feet beyond the walls with a wood soffit; roofing is built-up 4-ply tar and gravel. A screened porch and carport are located at the south end. Wood decking completes the exterior on the north, east and south sides of the house, as well as at the main entry. The decking is fir. All exterior trim at posts and beams, and exterior doors and roof fascia are redwood. A redwood fence along the street provides privacy.

Interior:

The interior concept of the upper level is of an open pavilion, with a central core of enclosed spaces at the intersection of the long and short axes. This level accommodated functions which are essentially open – living, dining, multiuse space – and a central core of closed functions (part of the kitchen, half-bath, closet, cabinetry).

This core idea enables all four corners to remain open, giving the sense of a single space. Interior walls of the upper level are painted fir plywood and birch plywood, finished natural. The flooring is 9"x 9" vinyl tile, solid terra cotta in color. The ceiling is of wood, 1x4 tongue-and-groove fir flooring, left natural. A large fireplace on the north wall is glazed white brick. Three-fourths of the exterior wall is fixed glass, giving a near and far view to the east, and of near garden spaces to the west, north and south. There is also a glass sliding door to a sun deck at the north end, and narrow full-height jalousies at several locations. All interior trim is redwood finished natural.

The lower level accommodates enclosed bedrooms and a central open space, originally enclosable by wood folding doors as sleep spaces for children, and as play space when open; plus bathrooms, and utility spaces. Materials used in the upper floor are continued on the lower. The exterior wall facing east is fixed glass with narrow full-height jalousies at returns. Heating and cooling is by forced air, with an electronic air filter. Emergency power is provided by a standby generator.

In 1986, the north bedroom and center space on the lower level were altered to provide a shower room connected to the north bedroom, and also in that year, a screened pet enclosure, 10 feet wide by 14 feet long and 8 feet high, was attached to the house off the center space of the lower floor. It was assembled with screws and dismountable, and is not considered an essential part of the house.

8. Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

☐ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

☐ **B** removed from its original location.

☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.

☐ **D** a cemetery.

☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

☐ **F** a commemorative property.

☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
(enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance
1957

Significant Dates
1957

Significant Persons
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
Louis Skoler

Narrative Statement of Significance
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography
(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
☐ previously listed in the National Register
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # ______
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # ______

Primary location of additional data:

☒ State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☐ Local government
☐ University
☐ Other Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References
(Place additional boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	18	409458	4765949
2	18		
3	18		
4	18		

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Anthony Opalka and Kathleen LaFrank (see attached)
organization NYS Historic Preservation Office
date December 2009
street & number PO Box 189
telephone 518-237-8643
city or town Waterford
state NY
zip code 12188

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items
(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name/title
street & number
telephone
city or town
state
zip code

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.).*

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

STATE MENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Summary

The Louis and Celia Skoler house is significant under National Register Criterion C as an outstanding and highly intact example of mid-twentieth century modern residential design in Syracuse. Built in 1957 and occupied in the spring of 1958, the Skoler house was the city's first example of modern architecture. The residence was designed by its owner, architect Louis Skoler (1920-2008), a graduate of Cornell University's School of Architecture. Mr. Skoler later became professor at Syracuse University and designed several modern residences in Syracuse and Central New York. During his teaching career, Skoler used the house as a teaching laboratory. Summer courses at Syracuse University had students surrounding the house with sketchbooks and cameras. Over the years, prominent visitors--artists and architects of note – engaged as design critics and lecturers by Syracuse University and its School of Architecture--were visitors and guests in the house. They discussed the property as an outstanding example of mid-twentieth-century residential design. Mr. Skoler related that one of China's leading architects, as well as a major architect of the Soviet Union, who later became the President of the Union of Soviet Architects, whose names he did not recall, were introduced to this house as an important representation of mid-twentieth-century design.

Through his designs and classes over a thirty-year career, Louis Skoler played a significant role in introducing Modern architecture to the Central New York region. In 1970, his design for the Hawks House on Canandaigua Lake won the award for residential design in the American Iron and Steel Institute's Contemporary Design competition.

The Skoler residence is one of the architect's earliest residential designs—he had designed a summer house on Cazenovia Lake and a full-time residence in the Town of DeWitt outside of Syracuse in 1955---and is among his purest expressions of Modernism. The building's low rectangular form, flat roof, large expanses of glass and open interior marked it as a typical example of middle-class Modern design for the period; yet, the building also embodied features that became distinctive elements of Mr. Skoler's later work. The most notable of these was the multi-use children's area, which could be subdivided for different uses as the need arose. Almost all of his later residential designs include similar multi-use spaces.

The architect's skill is also evident in the way he took full advantage of the site, constructing the building near the top of a drumlin. Although the building is set back from the heavily developed street no more than 15 feet, its front room faces inward and the rear of the building commands full views over the valley of more than one mile through glass walls. By constructing the building on uneven ground, Mr. Skoler was able to use the variation in the terrain to design a multi-level interior that maximized the connection between indoor and outdoor spaces.

Although the earliest examples of modern residential architecture in America were sophisticated buildings commissioned by wealthy clients or experimental exercises intended to educate the public, the severe housing shortage of the late 1940s engendered by millions of returning veterans eager to marry and start families sparked a wide variety of design and technical innovations, many of which won rapid acceptance by government housing agencies, developers and buyers. As a result, American middle-class architecture of the early 1950s began to incorporate features such as long, low, rectilinear forms, flat roofs, large expanses of glass, open interiors, zoned planning, built-in storage, and radiant heat. A classic example of its type, the Skoler house is also significant in representing the introduction of modern architecture into the middle-class housing market in central New York in the post World War II era.

Post World War II Syracuse

In the period after World War II, Syracuse as a major northeastern industrial city began its long decline. At the end of the war, demand for products needed for the war disappeared, and many manufacturing companies that had geared up for war production either greatly scaled back their operations as demand for their products waned with the close of the war, or in some case, ceased operations altogether. This had a significant impact on the building fabric of Syracuse as so many of these companies had operated within mid-nineteenth- to early-twentieth-century masonry industrial buildings that were deemed to be obsolete at this time. As a result, many of these multi-story factory buildings were abandoned for single-story manufacturing buildings located just outside city limits in what had been farmland or otherwise undeveloped acreage. Construction of the New York State Thruway began in the mid-1950s, and later in the decade and into the 1960s, the major north-south interstate highway intersected with the Thruway at Syracuse and changed the nature of transportation in the region. Even before completion of the highway system, suburban housing patterns developed and caused a major shift in population from the center city to the surrounding towns. While the city lost population, the towns changed from rural areas to suburban, with vast tracts of newly developed housing from the late 1940s through the present day.

Post-World War II Suburban Architecture in Context[1]

The period after World War II was marked by a tremendous increase in the construction of single-family suburban houses in the United States. This development was motivated in part by the enormous number of new families formed after the war, the resulting housing shortages in urban areas, an increase in automobile ownership, the surge in the construction of new highways as noted above, economic growth and prosperity, particularly among the middle class, the availability of materials that had been scarce during the war, the development of new materials and technologies for the war that were now available for non-military uses, and incentives for new construction provided by the federal government, such as Veterans Administration and Federal Housing Administration (FHA) mortgages. The stated objective of the Housing Act of 1949 was "the realization as soon as feasible of the goal of a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family."[2] Although some of these programs paid token attention to the problems of the lower classes and/or to provision of multi-family housing in urban areas, government programs greatly favored middle-class white families building new homes in the suburbs. This pattern was reinforced by the vast increase in federal funds for highways to transport the new commuters to their jobs in the cities. These and other factors precipitated the greatest building boom in the history of the country. In 1950 alone, 1,692,000 new single-family homes were constructed in the United States.[3]

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[1] This section quoted almost entirely from Kathleen LaFrank, McComb House, Poughkeepsie, New York, National Register Nomination, 2009.

Some areas of the country, such as Long Island, with its proximity to New York City and large tracts of open farm and estate land, saw a proliferation of new developments. The vast majority of them were constructed by developers, the largest and most prolific of which was the Levitt Company, which learned to capitalize on the economics of large-scale production. In three large Levittowns (in New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, 1947-c1960s), the company constructed small, simple houses with slight stylistic variables, prefabricated interchangeable components, and standardized mechanical systems on the assembly line model. These houses (the basic model was 800 square feet and sold for $7,990) were above all intended to be affordable, and although the overall appearances relied on more or less traditional design idioms, Levitt's houses incorporated several features that Frank Lloyd Wright had pioneered in the 1937 Usonian, his own attempt to design an affordable modern house for the middle class, including slab foundations, radiant heat, central fireplaces, open plans, and double-glazed sliding windows and doors.

While large-scale developers such as the Levitts concentrated on price, quantity, and efficiency of production, others experimented with design or innovation. Some companies concentrated on using materials such as steel, aluminum, asbestos, plywood, or plastics to produce affordable prefabricated homes.

The Lustron house, developed by Carl Strandlund in the late 1940s, was an all-metal prefabricated house that came on one truck and could be assembled in a matter of days. Efforts such as these were often supported and/or promoted by magazines, manufacturers, or government agencies. Strandlund, for example, received more than $40 million in government aid to support the production of Lustron houses. Magazines and museums also engaged architects to design prototypical single-family homes that provided "good" examples of domestic modern design.

In 1945, John Entenza, publisher of *Arts and Architecture*, for example, purchased five acres of land near Santa Monica, California and invited eight architects to design individual single-family houses that would serve as examples of high-quality residential design in the modern idiom. With some designed by such well-known architects as Eero Saarinen, Raphael Soriano, and Charles and Ray Eames, these so-called "Case Study" houses were widely publicized. Between 1945 and 1966, *Arts and Architecture* published designs for thirty-six Case Study houses and a proposed (but not built)

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[2] Gwendolyn Wright, *Building the Dream: A Social History of Housing in America* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1981), 246.
[3] David Ames and Linda Flint McClelland, *Historic Residential Suburbs: Guidelines for Evaluation of Documentation for the National Register of Historic Places* (Washington: US Department of the Interior, 2002), 65.

260-home subdivision.[4] In a similar vein, Daniel S. Defenbacher of the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis sponsored several "Idea Houses," constructed on the grounds of the museum, to demonstrate good examples of modern design for single family homes; more than 50,000 people visited the exhibit. Magazines such as *Architectural Record*, *Progressive Architecture*, and *Architectural Forum* also promoted good design by sponsoring award programs or designating stellar examples of modern residential design. Featured buildings might be architect-designed, owner built, or a collaborative effort between a builder and architect. Award programs included *Better Homes and Gardens'* Five Star Homes and *Parents' Magazine*'s "Best Home for Family Living." [5]

Both Marcel Breuer and Frank Lloyd Wright designed and built prototypical exhibit houses in Manhattan. Breuer's was commissioned by the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) and constructed in the museum's garden in 1949. This was the first of three "Houses in the Museum Garden" that MoMA commissioned c1949-51.[6] The museum's charge to Breuer was to design a moderately priced house for a person living on the outskirts of an urban area and commuting to the city.[7] It has been said that the exhibit was prompted by a model for Carl Strandlund's all metal Lustron house that had been constructed several blocks away. Apparently, Philip Johnson, MoMA's curator of architecture, was displeased with the favorable media reviews and long lines of people interested in the Lustron (more than 16,000 people viewed the Lustron model in sixteen days) and decided to exhibit a moderately priced house that also exemplified good Modern design.[8] Breuer's design was intended for a one-acre site and suited for a small, suburban family. It was conceived as a one-story house that could be expanded to two stories, and it was constructed as the two-story variation.[9] The residence was a clear illustration of Modern design, defined by its rectilinear form, clean lines, broad expanses of glass, lack of applied ornament, and flexible plan. It also promoted the use of common materials, such as plywood paneling, and it illustrated the distinctive butterfly roof and zoned plan that became signatures of Breuer's residential oeuvre. The Breuer house also proved popular, drawing 75,000 people in the summer of 1949.

In 1953, Wright constructed a demonstration Usonian House on the site of the Guggenheim before the museum was constructed.[10] Wright, who had called the house of moderate cost "not only America's major architectural problem but the problem most difficult for her major architects," had pioneered many of the ideas incorporated into contemporary houses in his 1937 house for Herbert and Katherine Jacobs in Madison, Wisconsin. In this first so-called Usonian House, Wright had eliminated a visible roof, the basement, interior trim, radiators and light fixtures, paint, plaster, gutters, and downspouts. Instead, the small, L-shaped Jacobs house (1,340 square feet) was built with the same natural materials (wood and brick) inside and out and included "essential" features such as a large living-room with maximum views of the outdoors, fireplace, built-in storage spaces and furniture, a small, central kitchen workspace, and a private bedroom wing. While the Jacobs House was built for $5,500 in 1937, Wright estimated that the same house would have cost $20,000 in 1953 and noted that he had built approximately one hundred Usonians all over the country; prices ranged from $12,000-$70,000, with a few exceeding $100,000. [11] In 1954, Wright published *The Natural House*, specifically demonstrating how his principles of organic design could be applied to the single-family house, and he continued to design Usonians until his until his death in 1959.

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[4] Ames and McClelland, 67.

[5] Ames and McClelland, 69.

[6] The second MoMA house was designed by Gregory Ain in cooperation with *Women's Home Companion.* It was intended as a model for a house in a suburban subdivision. The third was a Japanese exhibition house.

[7] Arthur J. Pulos, *The American Design Adventure 1940-1975* (Cambridge MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1988), 64-5.

[8] "The Prefab House comes under Scrutiny at New York's MoMA," *Architectural Review*, 1 October 2008. http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m3575/is_1340_224/ai_n31176556/

[9] A model inside the museum showed the one-story version of the house.

[10] David Henkin, the young Taliesin trained architect who headed the crew building this house, was also then engaged in an effort to develop a cooperative community of Wright-designed and inspired residences in Westchester County. Usonia, a community of forty-three residences in Pleasantville, was developed primarily between 1949 and the 1960s and features a plan and three houses designed by FLW.

Finally, there were the "how to" books and articles aimed directly at buyers and builders. These publications offered principles, plans, and advice and addressed both practical and aesthetic considerations. Among the most influential was *Tomorrow's House: How to Plan Your Post-War Home Now* (1945) by George Nelson and Henry Wright (editors at *Architectural Forum*), which presented an argument for "tomorrow's home as…an integrated, highly individual expression of how a twentieth-century family lives."[12] *Tomorrow's Home* took the reader through the planning process room by room and feature by feature, addressing space planning, provision of light and air, mechanical systems, acoustics, and so on. The book was liberally illustrated with photos, drawings, and plans. Other popular books included *Modern House in America* (1940), by James and Katherine Ford; *The Small House of Tomorrow* (1945), by Paul R. Williams, a Los Angeles architect; *If You Want to Build a House* (1946), by Elizabeth B. Mock; and *Before You Buy a House* (1953), by John Hancock Callender.

The effect of so much media attention made modernism not only an acceptable but also a desirable alternative for the contemporary middle-class home buyer.[13] A 1945 survey in *Saturday Evening Post* revealed that only 14 percent of respondents wanted to live in an apartment or "used" house. The *Post* concluded that post-war buyers wanted new houses, modern floor plans, contemporary materials, and the latest appliances.[14] Desirable features included picture windows, sliding glass doors, and open floor plans to make the house seem larger; zoned planning and grouped activity areas for efficiency and to provide a balance between privacy and visibility; and the "outdoor living room," or the private back yard, to encourage family centered leisure activities.[15] Despite growing public enthusiasm for modern materials, planning and design concepts, the embrace of the Modern style itself was not unanimous. In the early 1950s, the FHA did not consider houses with modern design features a sound investment and instructed evaluators to lower the scores of buildings with conspicuously modern features such as flat roofs and plain facades. In one example, apparently even a prefabricated Usonian by Frank Lloyd Wright was denied FHA approval.[16] Nevertheless, despite the continued popularity of some traditional features, by the early 1950s, the basic principles of modern design had infiltrated the average builder's catalogue and most new single family houses were organized horizontally, featured open interiors with zoned planning, and incorporated modern materials and technology.

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[11] Frank Lloyd Wright, *The Natural House* (New York: Horizon Press, 1954), 68.
[12] George Nelson and Henry Wright, *Tomorrow's House: How to Plan Your Post-War Home Now* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1945), 9.
[13] Ames and McClelland, 67-69.
[14] Wright, *Building the Dream*, 253.
[15] Wright, *Building the Dream*, 254.

The most popular manifestation of this mix of the traditional and the modern was the ranch house. The long, low ranch house emerged in California in the 1930s and was intended as an outgrowth of traditional regional architecture. But, by the 1950s and 60s, the ranch had become the most popular contemporary house type in the country. While ranch houses incorporated a number of features that were also associated with modern architecture, including horizontal forms, open plans, picture windows, sliding glass doors, broad chimneys, exposed timber beams, deep eaves, exterior terraces or patios, other typical ranch house characteristics, such as pitched roofs, clapboard siding, shutters, and wide front porches, looked back to more traditional residential architecture. As Gwendolyn Wright has said, the ranch house was a "safe contemporary look."[17]

Louis Skoler

Louis Skoler passed away in December of 2008 and his papers were donated to the Syracuse University Archives. While they have not yet been cataloged, they are available for research, and much of the information contained in this section was gleaned from the papers.

He was born in Utica, about 50 miles east of Syracuse, in 1920. After serving in the Second World War, Mr. Skoler studied architecture at Cornell University, where he won a student award given by the New York State Association of Architects, a Certificate of Merit for Excellence in Design in 1947. In 1951, the year of his graduation, he was the winner of the Charles Goodwin Sands Memorial Medal for Design for his thesis. For a time after graduation, he worked in an existing practice in Syracuse, Sargent, Webster, Crenshaw and Folley, and was involved in the design of schools of all types as well as the St. Lawrence Seaway Administration Building. In 1959, he accepted a teaching post in Syracuse University's School of Architecture, where he taught until 1990. (He held the title of Professor Emeritus into the 1990s.)

During that time, Louis Skoler also maintained a private practice, and was responsible for the designs of several firehouses for the city of Syracuse as well as private residences both in Syracuse and the Central New York region, where design ideas tested in his personal residence such as an open plan with flexible spaces and an enclosed service core were applied to these later buildings. He was also worked on the design of several publicly-funded housing projects in the Syracuse area.

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[16] Wright, *Building the Dream*, 251.
[17] Wright, *Building the Dream*, 251.

He did not do a great deal of writing about the profession of architecture. Rather, his main interest was in teaching design, and in particular, incoming students, where he could mold their ideas about architecture and design at the beginning of their education. His influence on his students was substantial, and in fact, one of his former students, a member of the New York State Board for Historic Preservation, described Skoler as an "icon" in the Syracuse University School of Architecture.[18]

According to another former student, his challenge was "have you explored all the possibilities? Have you found the best solutions?"[19] One of his faculty colleagues noted that Skoler's interest in the Bauhaus aesthetic was illustrated in his early design classes that focused on the influence of Richard Neutra such as the intersection of planes, columns, an interest in post-and-beam construction, and model studies.[20]

Perhaps the best description of him comes from a 1993 application to the FAIA that includes a "Digest of Achievements:"

> From his earliest years at Syracuse University [Louis Skoler] was a principal influence on the development of the [Syracuse Univerity] School [of Architecture], now known nationally and abroad for the excellence of its program, and for its philosophy of design as a discipline also embracing history, culture and tradition. And in pursuit of that goal, he continually emphasized the role of the humanities sequence in the program. Cited by colleagues and graduates alike as mentor and role model, he is best remembered for his endless inquiry and exploration, and willingness to question conventional wisdom.
>
> His early hears of teaching were devoted to a radical restructuring of introductory design as a sequence of rigorous lessons; in the following years, he explored an inclusivist philosophy embracing, in both studio and lecture hall, other cultures and other times. His service as administrator of both undergraduate and graduate programs was notable for his openness and for his respect for the individual.
>
> Reflecting a dedication to both teaching and practice, he stressed the interdependence of theory and work, and the need to establish and equilibrium between, on the one hand, rationality and logic, and, on the other, imagination, expression, and the ability to think in visual terms. And, his practice served numerous graduates as a bridge to the profession. Skoler's broad and optimistic vision of architecture has left a serious and permanent imprint on his school and his profession.[21]

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[18] Ray Andrews, New York State Board for Historic Preservation.

[19] Interview with Paul Scoville, student, employee (1969), now Principal, Collins & Scoville Architects, (C S Architecture), Albany, New York. Interviewed November 2009.

[20] Interview with Harvey Kaiser, former colleague at Syracuse University School of Architecture, Interviewed November 2009.

[21] FAIA Application

Louis Skoler was an avid student of Modern architecture, and in addition to Richard Neutra, described his influences as Frank Lloyd Wright, Paul Rudolph and Marcel Breuer.[22] Among the courses he taught at Syracuse University were "Twentieth Century Manifestos," which dealt with Bauhaus, International Style, European Modernism and the like, and "Nordic Architecture," focusing on the work of Alvar Aalto, and the Saarinen brothers, among others.

Like Wright, Mr. Skoler was also strongly influenced by Japanese architecture, especially the traditional Japanese interior architectural style known as Sukiya. In fact, during his teaching career, not only did he travel to Scandinavia to study the work of "Nordic" architects, but made several trips to Japan as well. The main elements of the Sukiya style include shoji, a door, window or room divider consisting of translucent paper over a wood grid frame and which may slide open; fusama, vertical rectangular panels that can slide from side to side to redefine spaces within a room, or act as doors; tatami, mats made of traditional Japanese flooring such as rice straw; and toko, a built-in recessed space in a Japanese reception room, which would be translated into English as an "alcove."[23]

Louis and Celia Skoler House

In 1957 Louis Skoler purchased a lot in the Scottholm neighborhood, which is at the eastern edge of the city of Syracuse, east of the campus of Syracuse University and Downtown Syracuse. Laid out in the 1920s, the Scottholm subdivision is generally characterized by houses designed in various early-twentieth-century revival designs, such as Colonial Revival, Dutch Colonial, Craftsman, Tudor, and others. Several of its early houses were designed by prominent local architect Ward Wellington Ward and some are already listed in the National Register. Although development was curtailed in the 1930s by the Depression, post-World War II prosperity brought renewed interest in building in the neighborhood, and the vast majority of post-World War II houses in the neighborhood are typical ranch houses of the period, further distinguishing the Skoler house from its neighbors.

Skoler's lot was on the east side of a drumlin, an oval or elongated hill believed to have been formed by the streamlined movement of glacial ice sheets across rock debris[24]. The house was sited on the downhill slope of the drumlin on the east side of the street, with the street is at the high point of the lot and the yard behind at the low point. The steep slope of the drumlin affords a long view out the rear of the house, which is, for the most part, almost entirely walled in glass. Although the next parallel street is but one block to the east, it is completely invisible from the Skoler house because of the steep drop in elevation.

Skoler's plan for a modern building failed to attract bidders in 1957 because of its unusual (for the time) construction methods, using post-and-beam construction. As a result, Mr. Skoler was forced to serve as his own contractor. Use of the post-and-beam structure allowed for maximum openness for the interior, and greater flexibility in function, particularly in the lower level where the center space could be converted from a bedroom to the children's play area. This feature was used in subsequent designs as well.

---

[22] Interview with Mr. Skoler, September 2008.
[23] Wikipedia, 11 December 2009 (Sukiya and links).
[24] Encyclopedia Brittanica Online 10 December 2009.

The principal floor contains a living room with a larger fireplace that occupies nearly an entire wall, a center core containing hidden storage, the kitchen, a half bath, and the dining area, and a more informal room close to the entrance. Behind the fireplace wall and extending across the entire rear of the house is an outdoor deck that can be accessed from a few points in the mostly glass walls of the rear of the house. On the exterior, there is a port-cochere that is part of the main block of the house. Just inside the main entrance is the staircase to the lower level, and on that level is a public hall, a bedroom at each end, a full bath, and in the center, the flexible space that became the hallmark of his work. This space can be divided into two rooms by folding "doors."

Upon its completion in the spring of 1958, Louis and Celia Skoler moved into the house with their two young children. They consciously furnished the house with furniture appropriate to its style, and lived there for the duration of their lives. Celia died in 2006 and Louis in 2008 and the house was bequeathed to their two children, neither of whom lives in the Syracuse area. Several years back, the house was designated a locally protected site under the Syracuse Landmarks Preservation Board law, and Mr. Skoler wished for the house to be listed in the National Register. It was approved for listing by the New York State Board for Historic Preservation, a fact that made Mr. Skoler very happy before his passing in 2008.

The legacy of Louis Skoler in Syracuse is apparent in both his influence on the untold number of students who studied in with him in the Syracuse University School of Architecture and in the buildings he designed both before and after his personal residence. His incorporation of the influences of the European Modernists and Frank Lloyd Wright and Japanese architecture into his work brought these ideas to Central New York in the Post-World War II era and with the listing of this house, the first such property to be proposed for listing in this part of New York State, recognition and appreciation of modern architecture in the region will begin to grow.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Interviews with Louis Skoler, 2008.

Interview with Paul Scoville, architect and former student, 2009

Interviews with Harvey Kaiser (former colleague) and Katryn Hanson, (Associate Dean, Syracuse University School of Architecture), 2009.

Syracuse University Archives: Louis Skoler Papers, donated to archives in 2009 and not yet cataloged.

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The property boundary is outlined on the attached map.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The nominated property includes the boundary that is historically associated with the Louis and Celia Skoler Residence since it was constructed in 1957.

Draft prepared by:

Cynthia Carrington Carter
219 Crawford Avenue
Syracuse, New York 13224

Photographs

Photographer: Cynthia Carrington Carter
219 Crawford Avenue
Syracuse, New York 13224

Date: December 2008

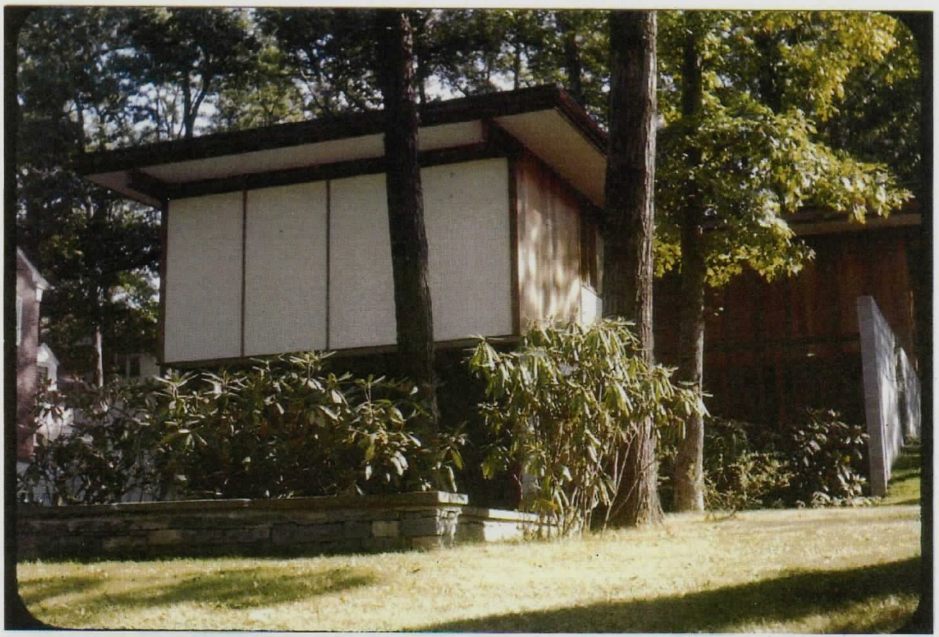
Tiff Files: CD-R of .tiff files on file at
National Park Service
Washington, DC, and

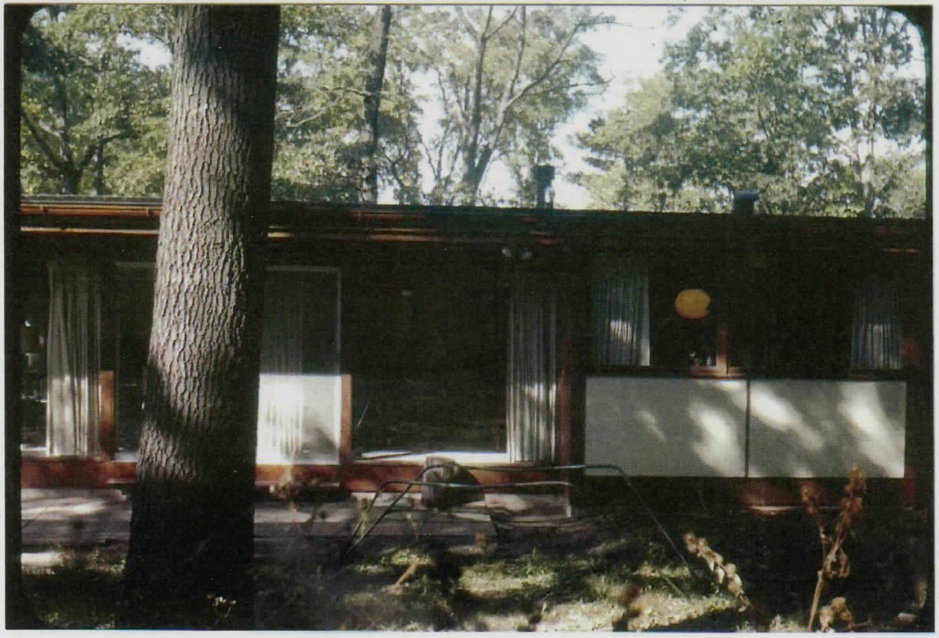
Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau
Peebles Island
PO Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188-0189

1. Exterior front, photographer facing northeast.
2. Exterior front and south side, photographer facing southeast.
3. Exterior front, photographer facing east.
4. Exterior front detail, photographer facing north.
5. Exterior front detail, photographer facing northwest.
6. Exterior northwest corner, photographer facing southeast.
7. North elevation, photographer facing south.
8. Rear deck, upper level, photographer facing south.
9. Rear deck, upper level, photographer facing north.
10. Interior entry, staircase to lower level, photographer north.
11. Interior dining area, photographer facing east.
12. Interior living area, photographer facing northwest.
13. Interior lower level, south bedroom, photographer facing southeast.
14. Interior lower level, north bedroom, photographer facing northeast.

EXAMPLES OF LOUIS SKOLER'S CONTEMPORARY WORK IN THE SYRACUSE AREA

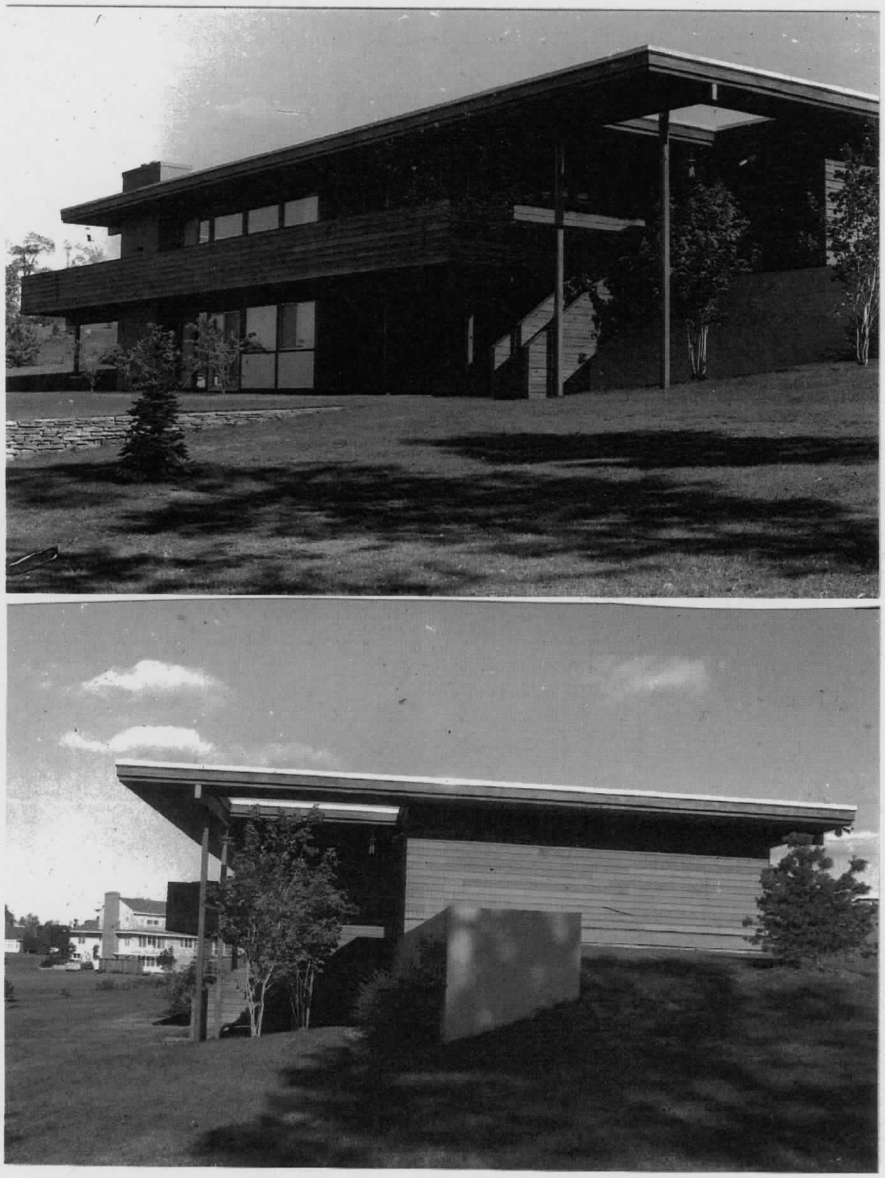
1960 GREENWALD HOUSE
SYRACUSE



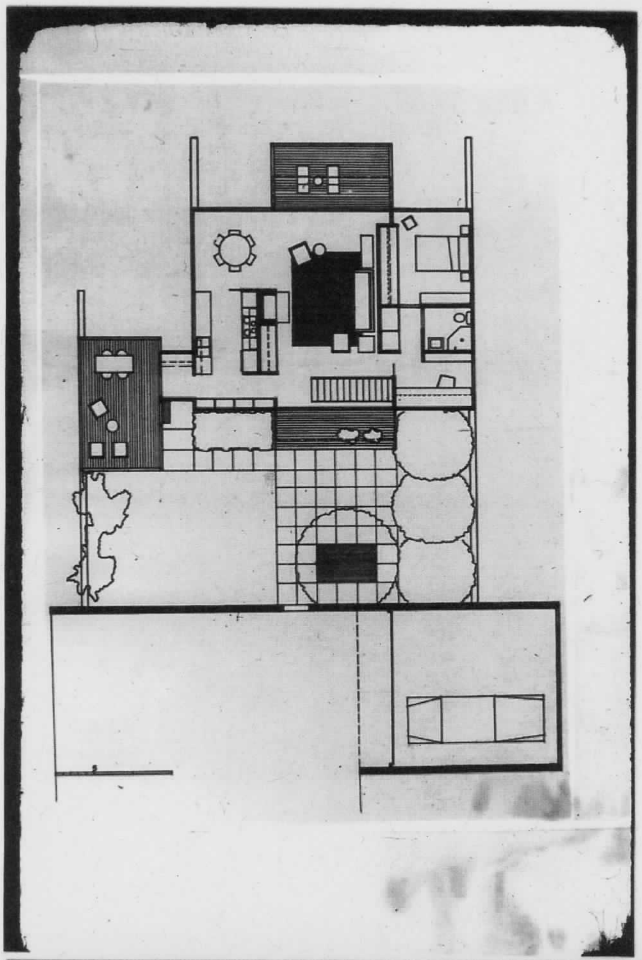


EXAMPLES OF LOUIS SKOLER'S CONTEMPORARY WORK IN THE SYRACUSE AREA

1961 DAVISON HOUSE DEWITT

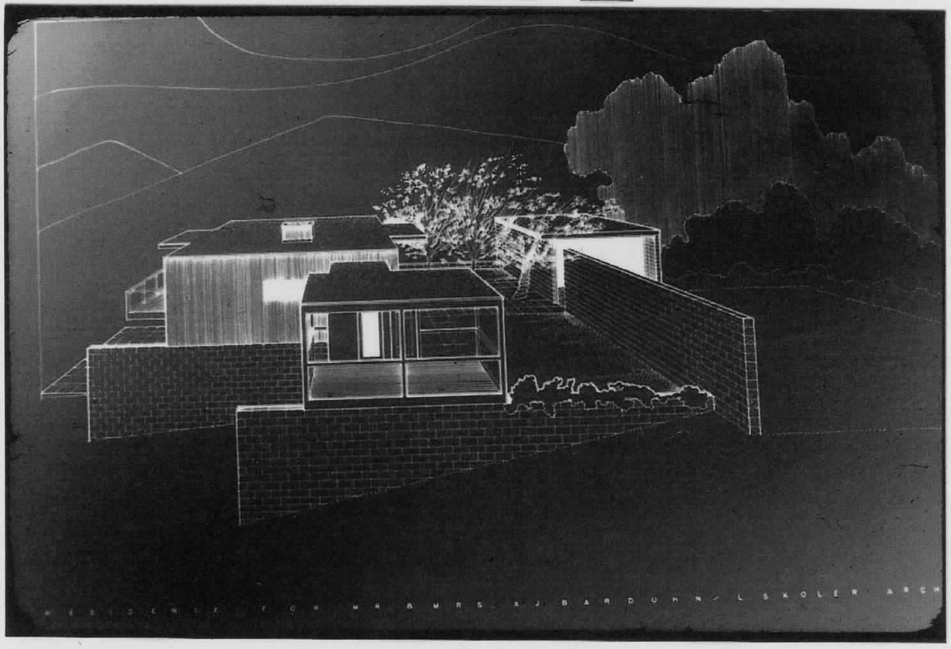


EXAMPLES OF LOUIS SKOLER'S CONTEMPORARY WORK IN THE SYRACUSE AREA



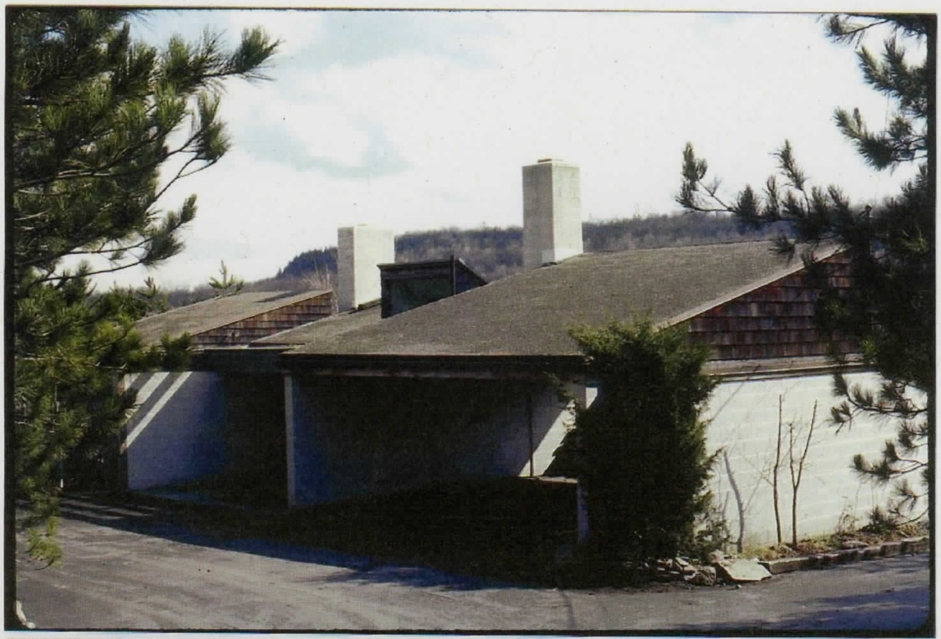
1964

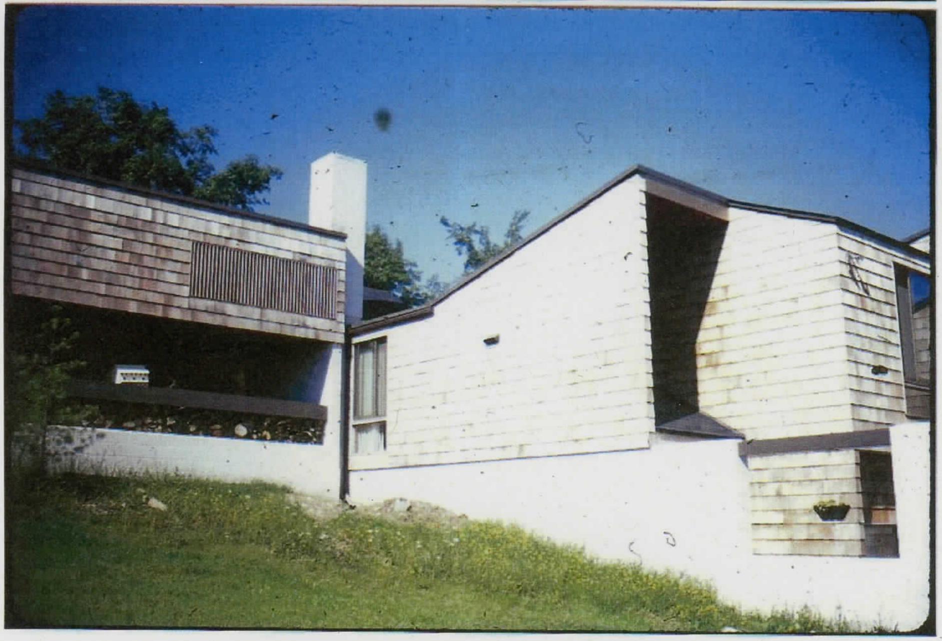
BARDUHN HOUSE
ONONDAGA
(BUILT)


RESIDENCE FOR MR & MRS. A.J. BARDUHN / L SKOLER ARCH

EXAMPLES OF LOUIS SKOLER'S CONTEMPORARY WORK IN THE SYRACUSE AREA

1966 SWEENEY HOUSE DEWITT





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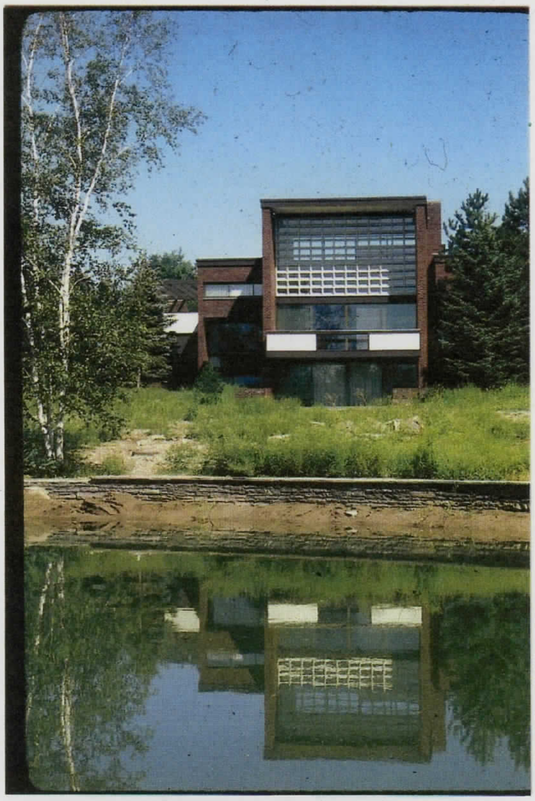
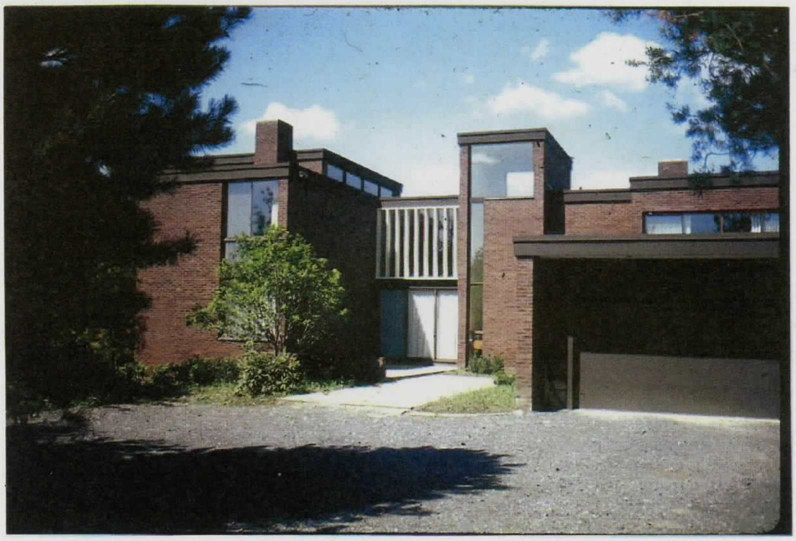


1966

RADIN HOUSE

DEWITT



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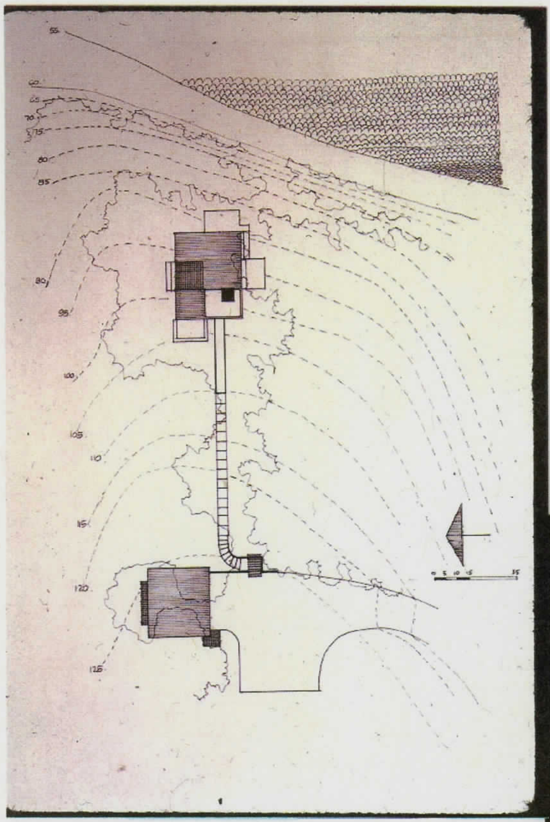
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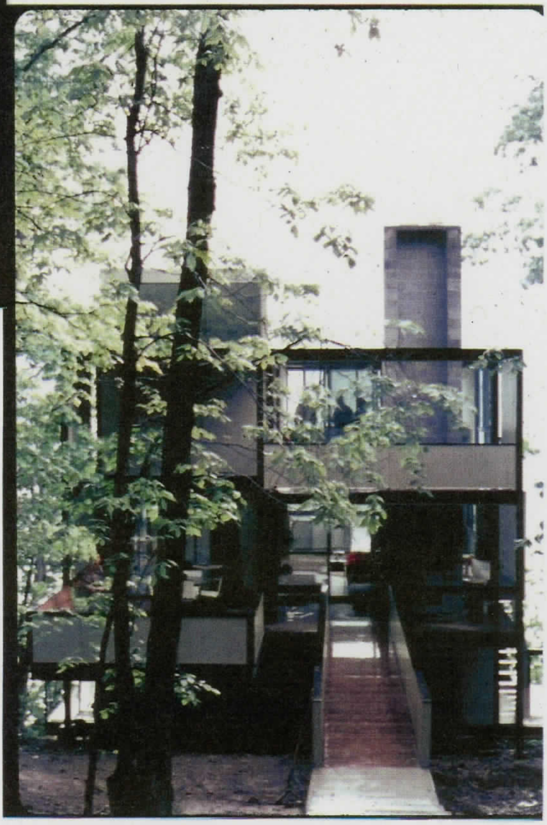
120
125
0 5 10 15 35

1967

HAWKS HOUSE
CANANDAIGUA LAKE



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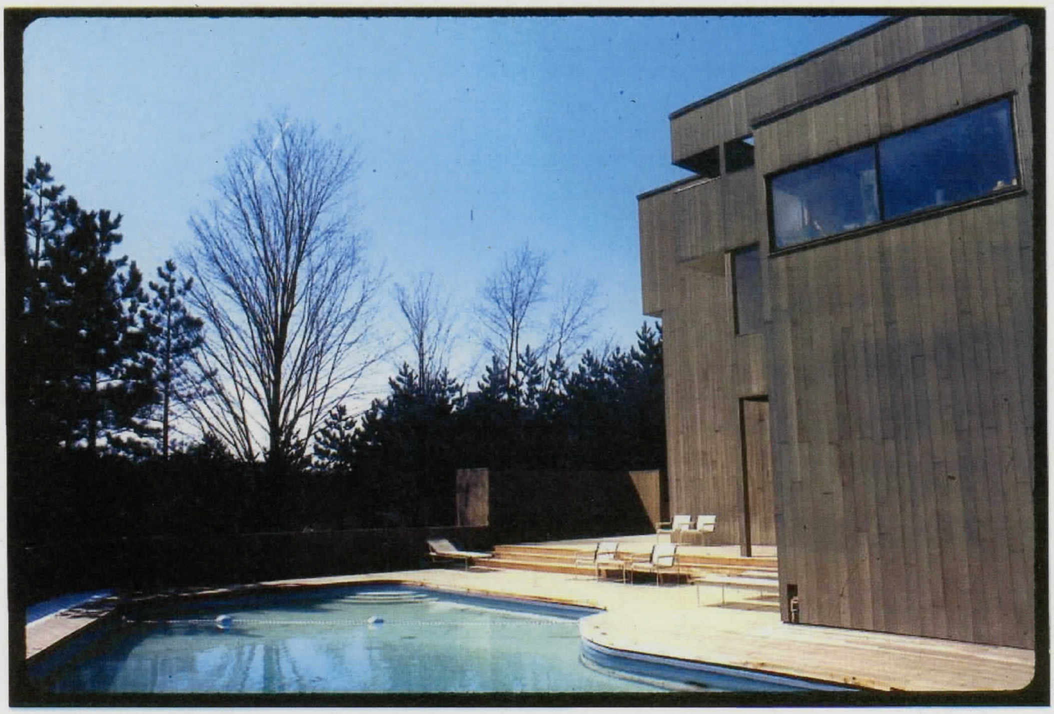

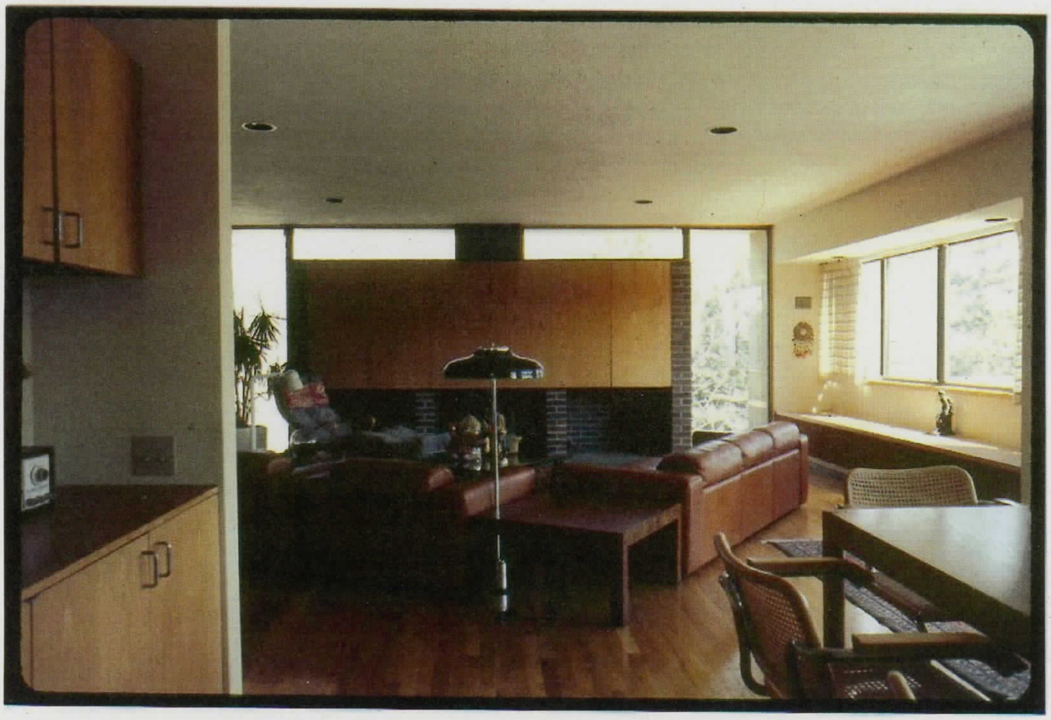

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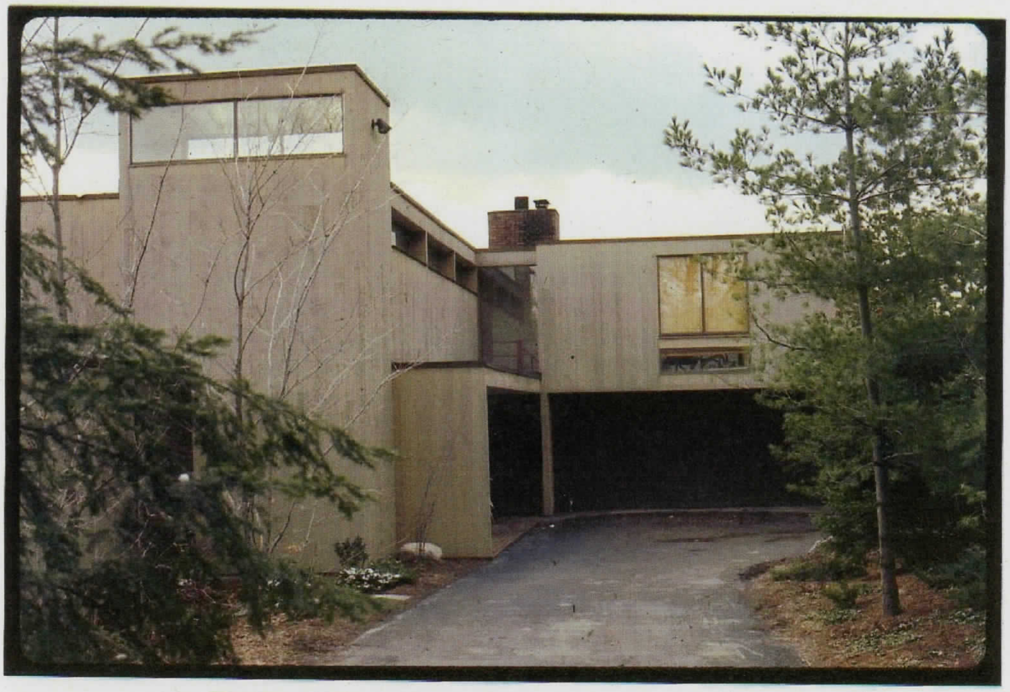
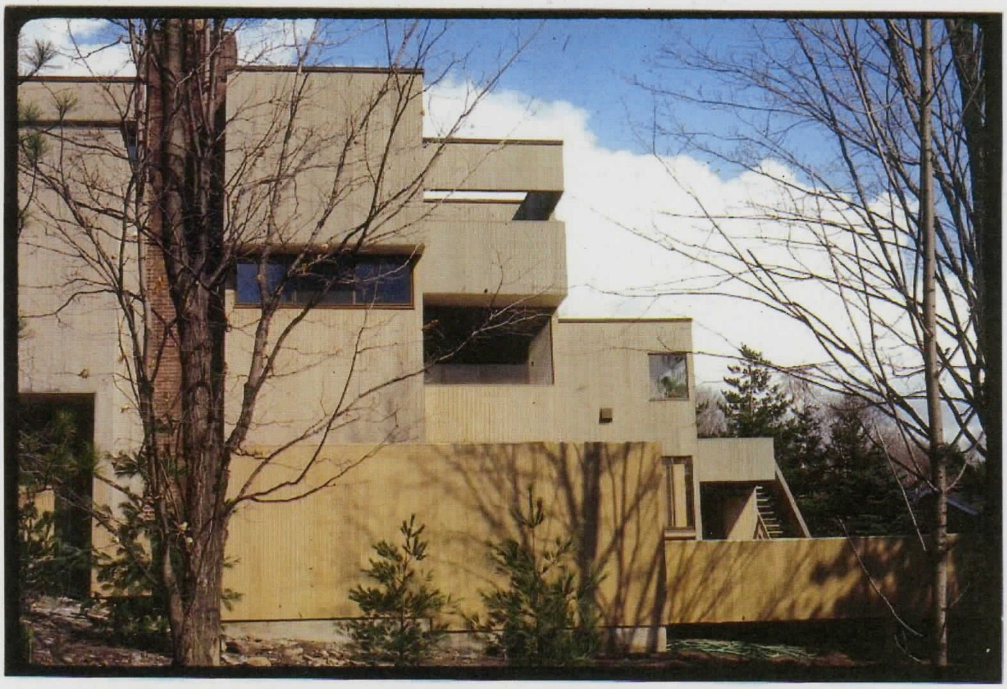
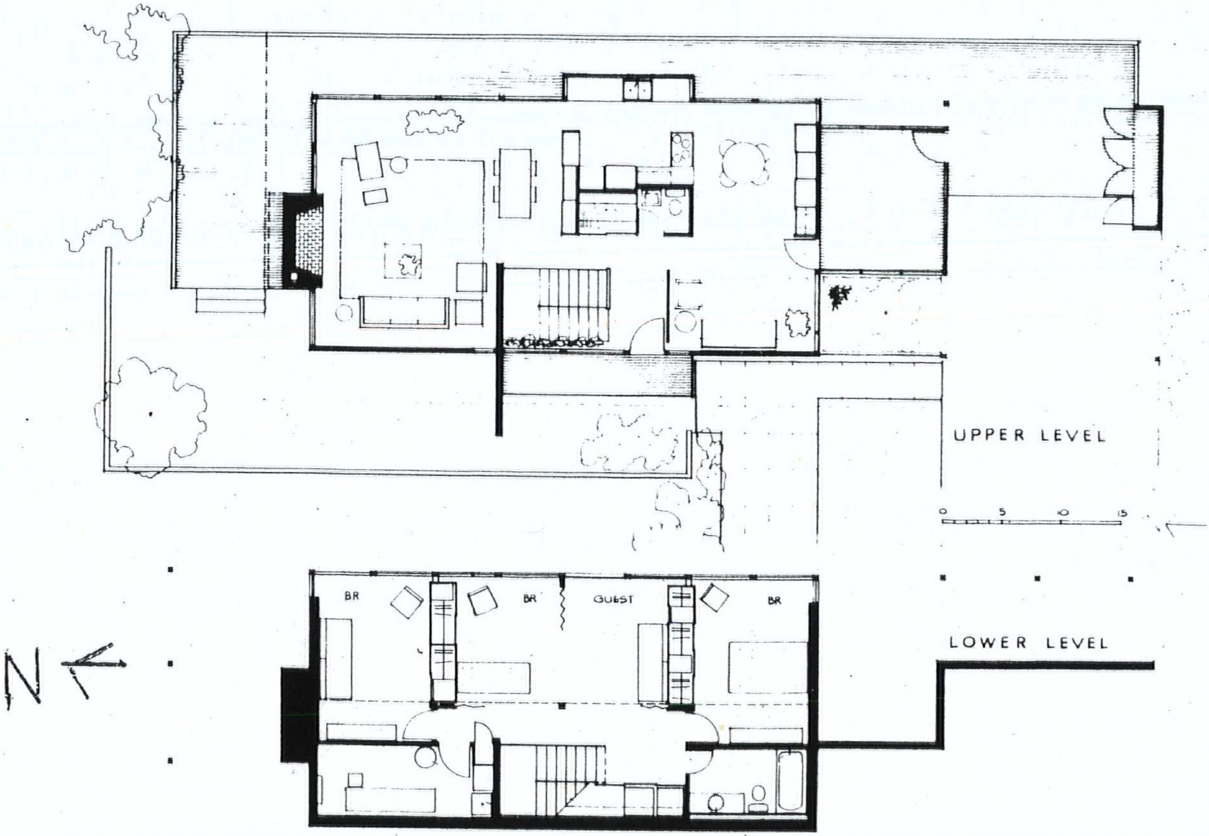


1971 EISENBERG HOUSE
DEWITT



LOUIS AND CELIA SKOLER RESIDENCE
SYRACUSE, ONONDAGA COUNTY
NEW YORK

FLOOR PLAN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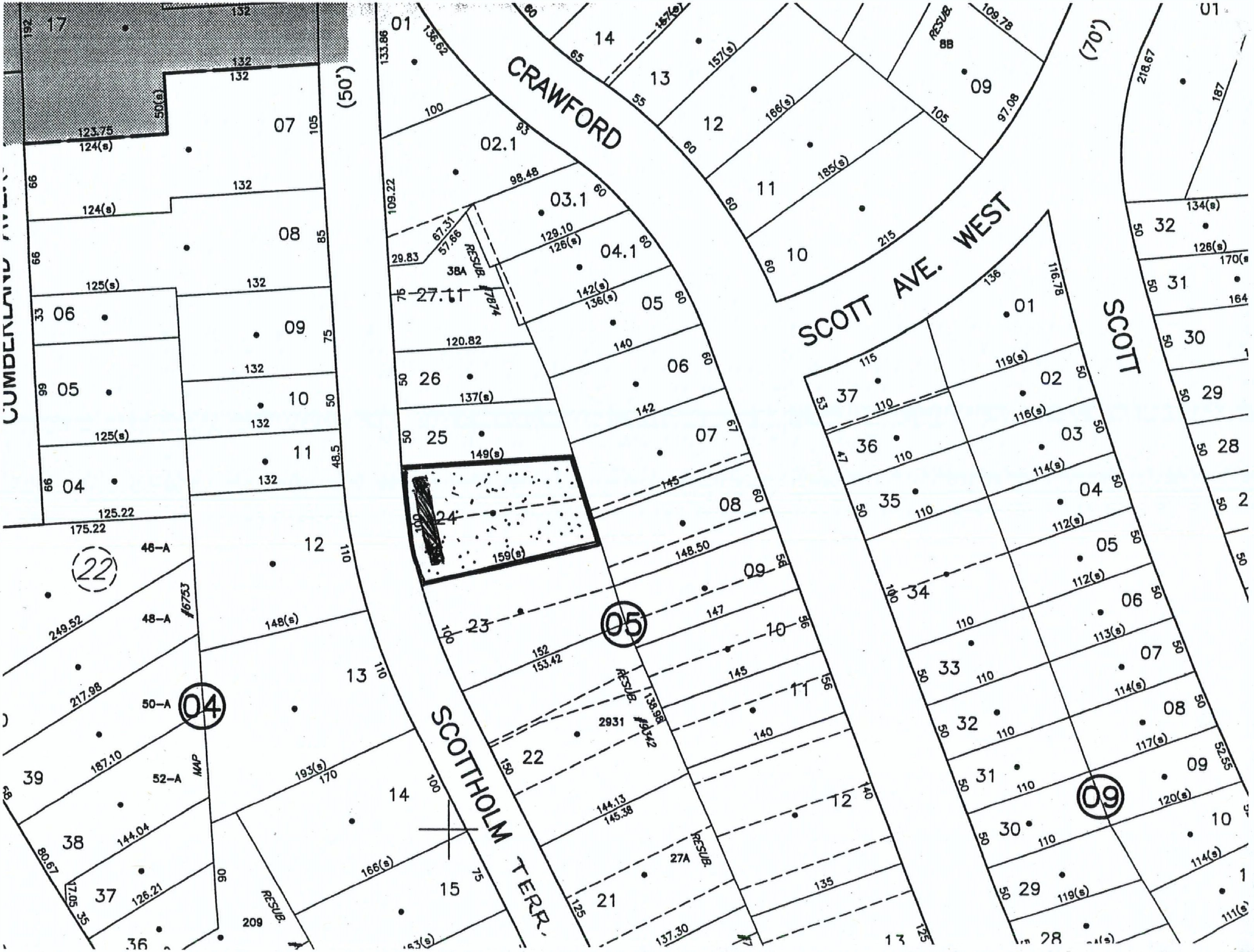
5
10
15
BR
BR
GUEST
BR
LOWER LEVEL
N


CUMBERLAND AVE.
CRAWFORD
SCOTT AVE. WEST
SCOTT
SCOTTHOLM TERR.
(50')
(70')
17
07
08
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09
05
10
11
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03.1
04.1
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27.11
26
25
24
23
22
21
2931
27A
38A
RESUB.
#7874
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#6753
MAP
(22)
46-A
48-A
50-A
52-A
39
38
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209
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11
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8B
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29
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05
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125.22
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144.04
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144.13
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116.78
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126(s)
170(s)
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136.62
109.22
67.31
57.66
29.83

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Skoler, Louis and Celia, Residence, The

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NEW YORK, Onondaga

DATE RECEIVED: 12/30/09
DATE OF PENDING LIST: 1/20/10
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 2/04/10
DATE OF 45TH DAY: 2/13/10
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 10000013

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N
DATA PROBLEM: N
LANDSCAPE: N
LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N
PDIL: N
PERIOD: N
PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N
SAMPLE: N
SLR DRAFT: N
NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

✓ ACCEPT ___RETURN ___REJECT 2·12·10 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places

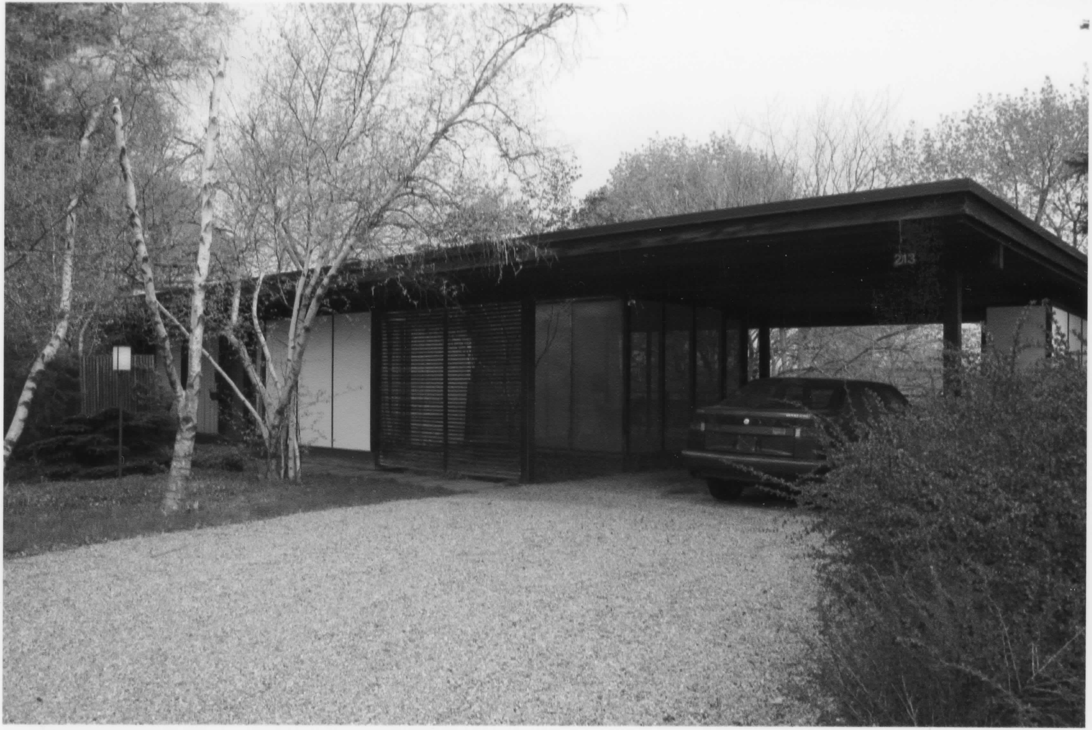
RECOM./CRITERIA________________

REVIEWER________________ DISCIPLINE________________

TELEPHONE________________ DATE________________

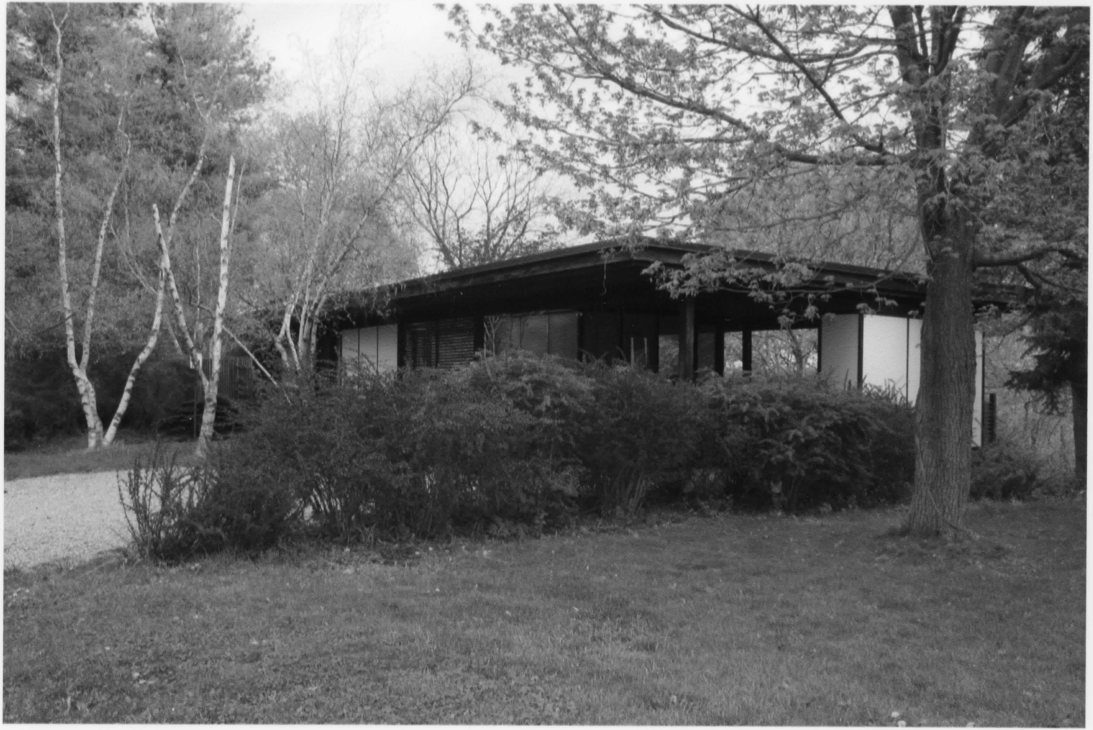
DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.


213

LOUIS + CELIA SKOLER RESIDENCE
SYRACUSE, ONONDAGA CO. N.Y.

PHOTO #1



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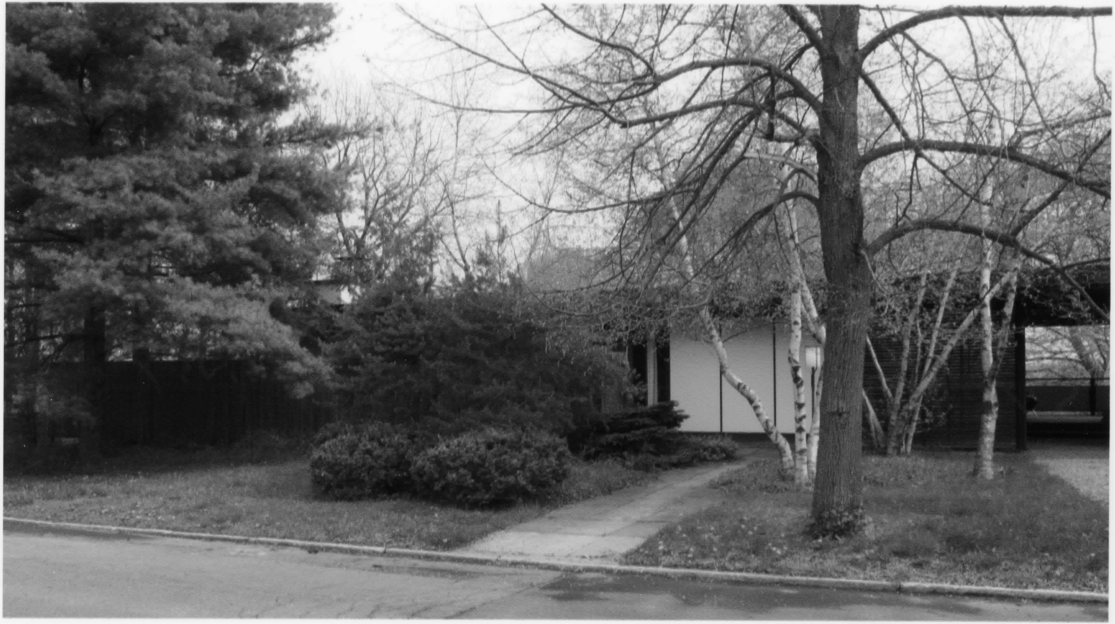

LOUIS + CELIA SKOLER RESIDENCE
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PHOTO #3

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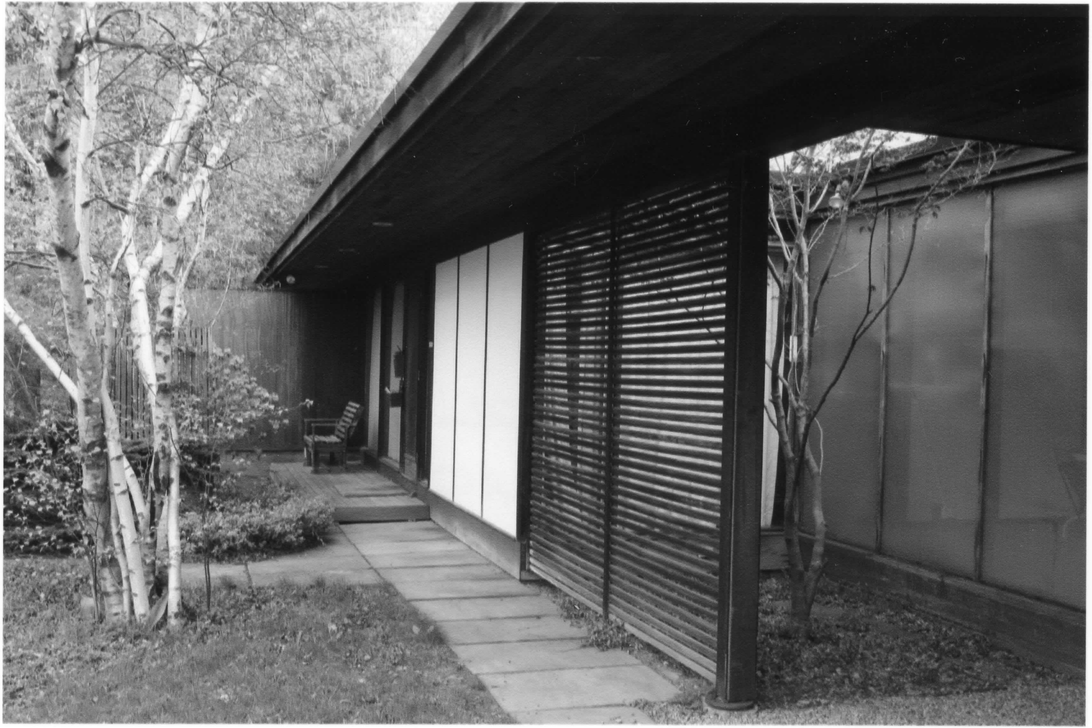

LOUIS & CELIA SKOLER RESIDENCE
SYRACUSE, ONONDAGA CO. N.Y.

PHOTO #4

LOUIS & CELIA SKOLER RESIDENCE
SYRACUSE, ONONDAGA CO. N.Y.

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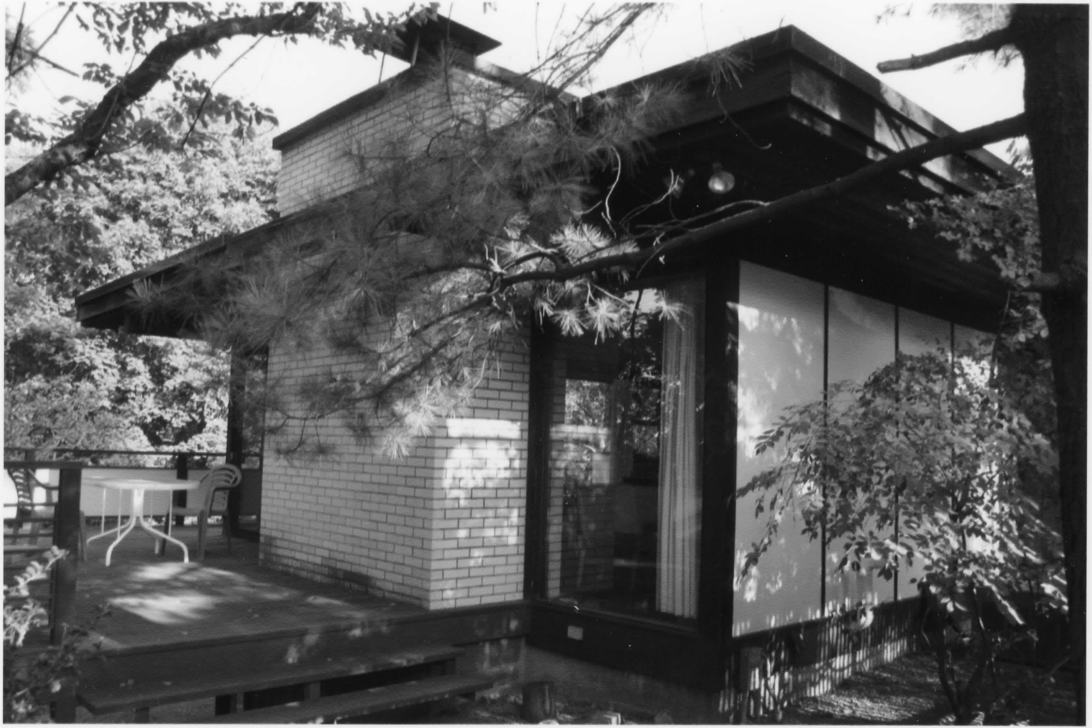

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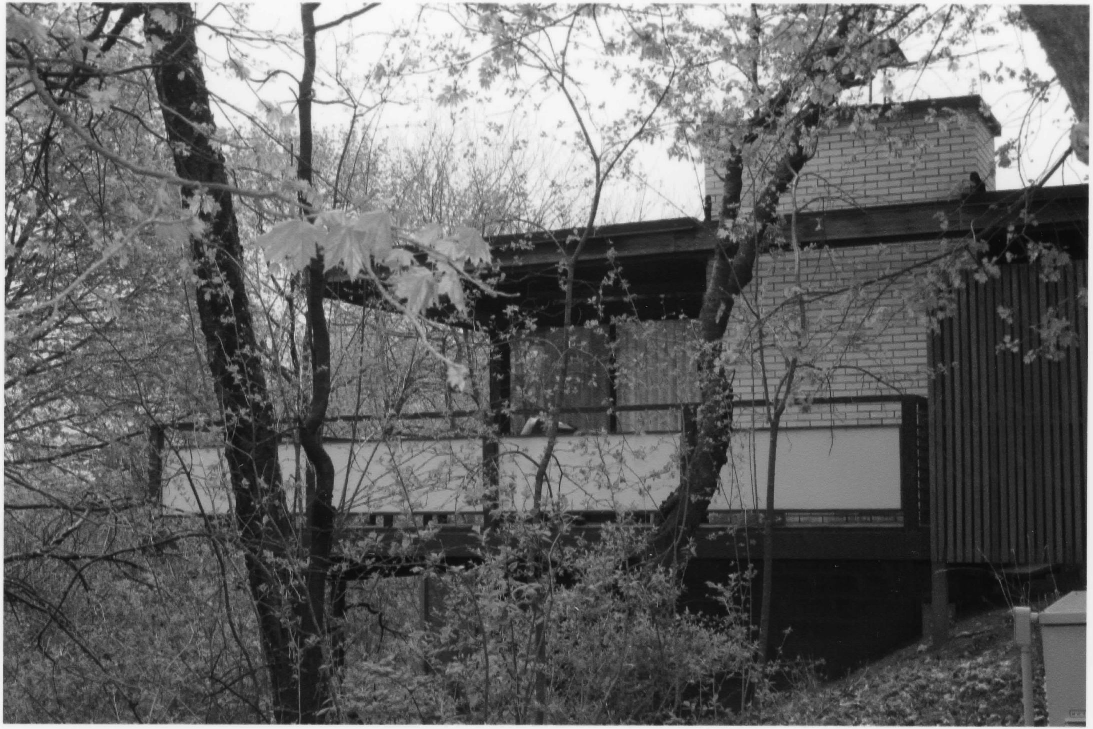

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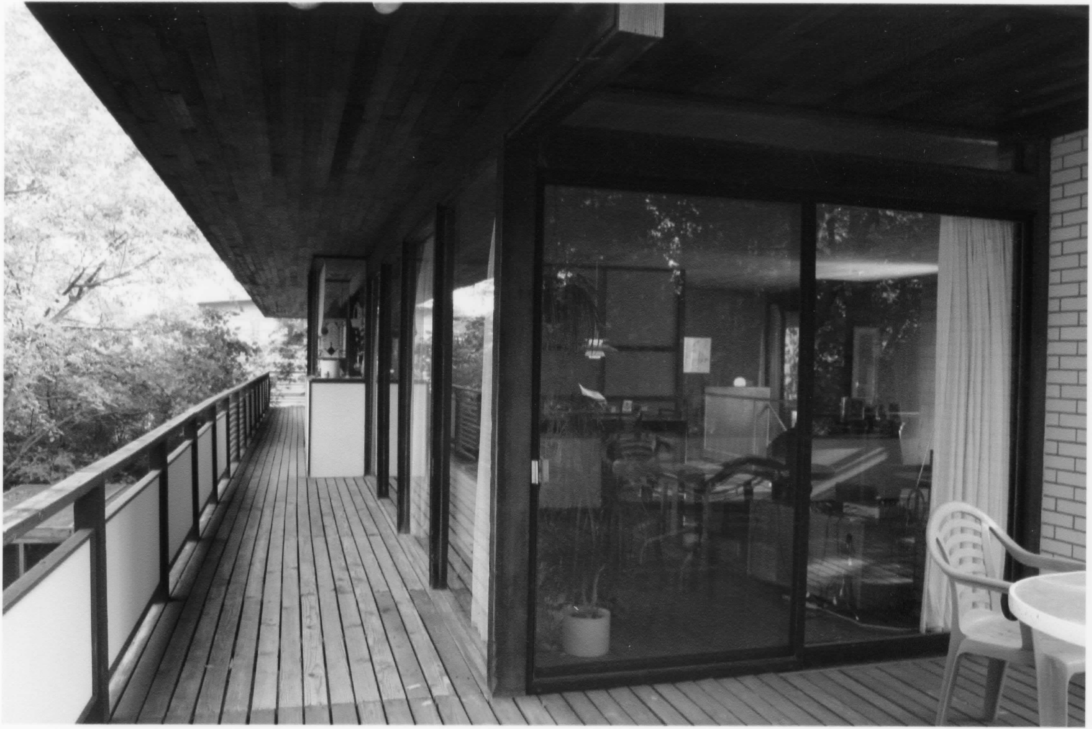

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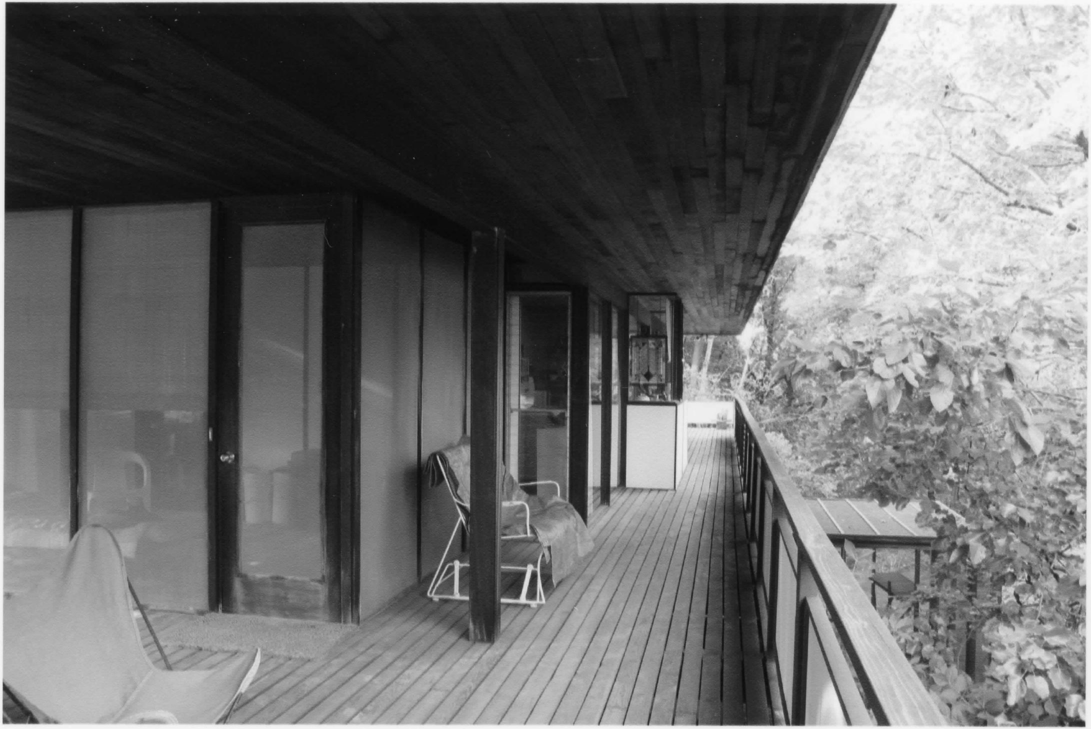
PHOTO #8



LOUIS + CELIA SKOLER RESIDENCE
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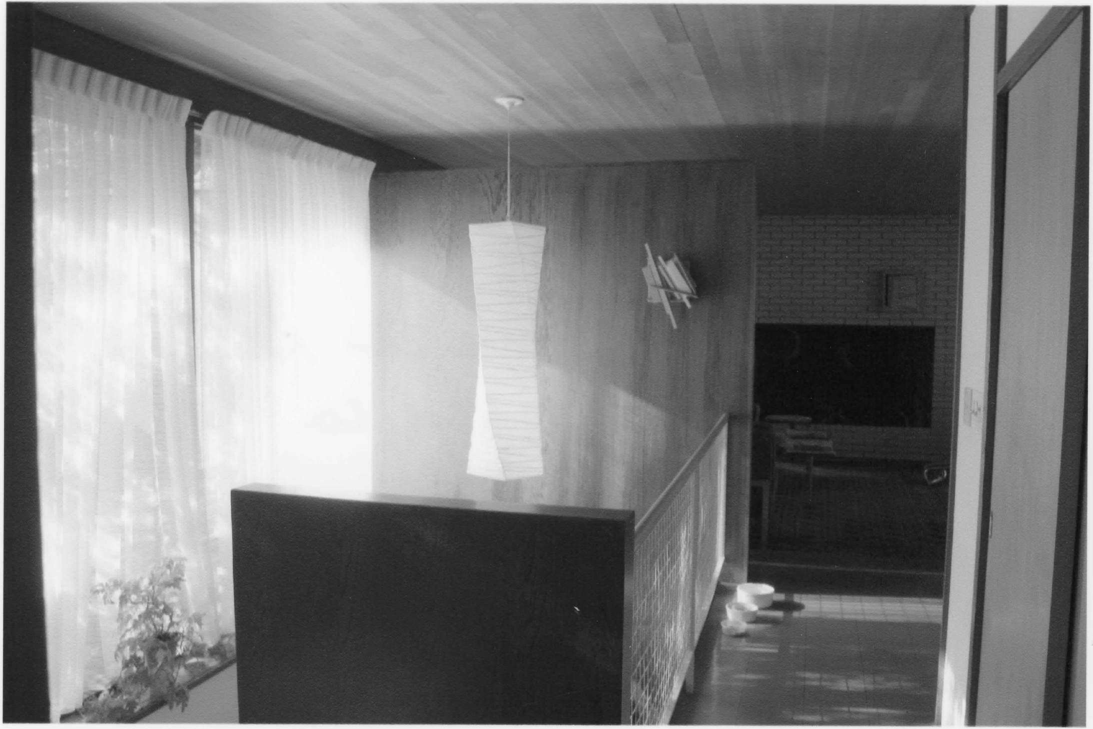

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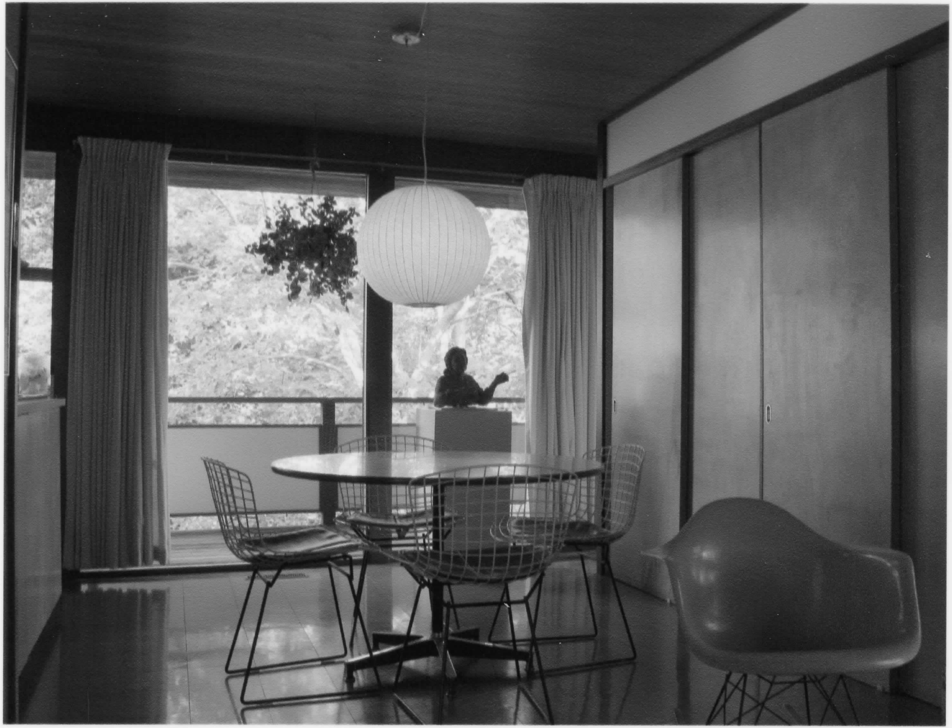


LOUIS + CELIA SKOLER RESIDENCE
SYRACUSE, ONONDAGA CO. N.Y.

PHOTO #11

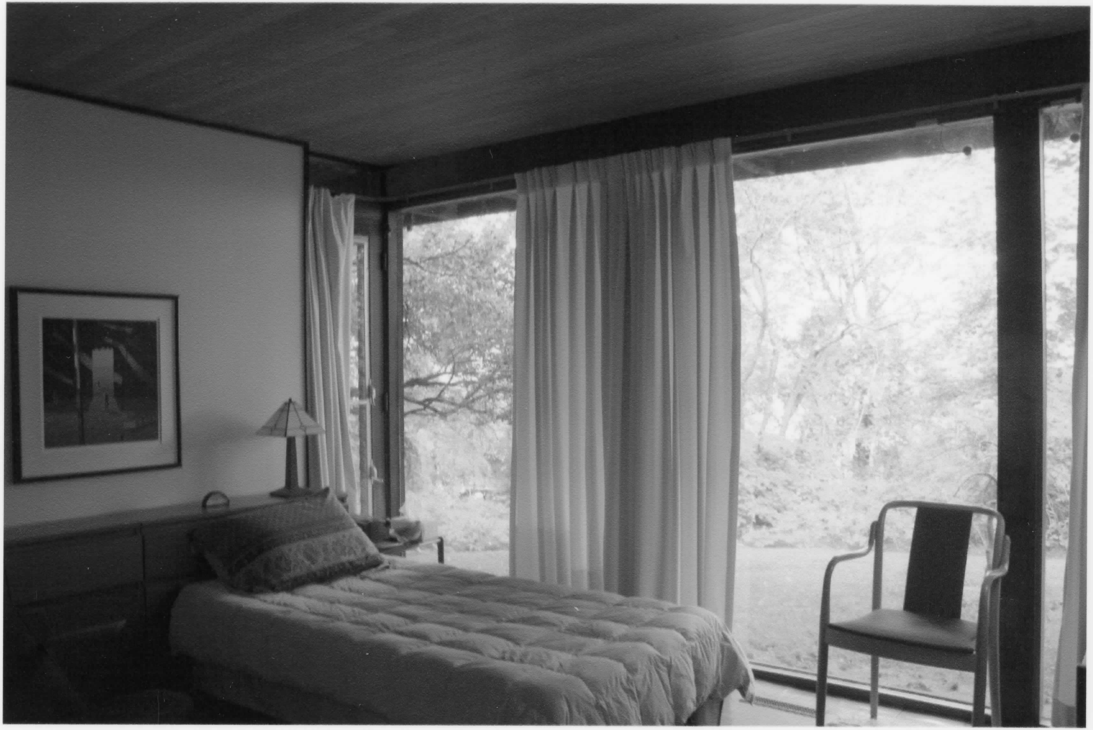
EPSON

LOUIS & CELIA SKOLER RESIDENCE
SYRACUSE, ONONDAGA CO. N.Y.

PHOTO #12

LOUIS & CELIA SKOLER RESIDENCE
SYRACUSE, ONONDAGA CO. N.Y.

PHOTO #13

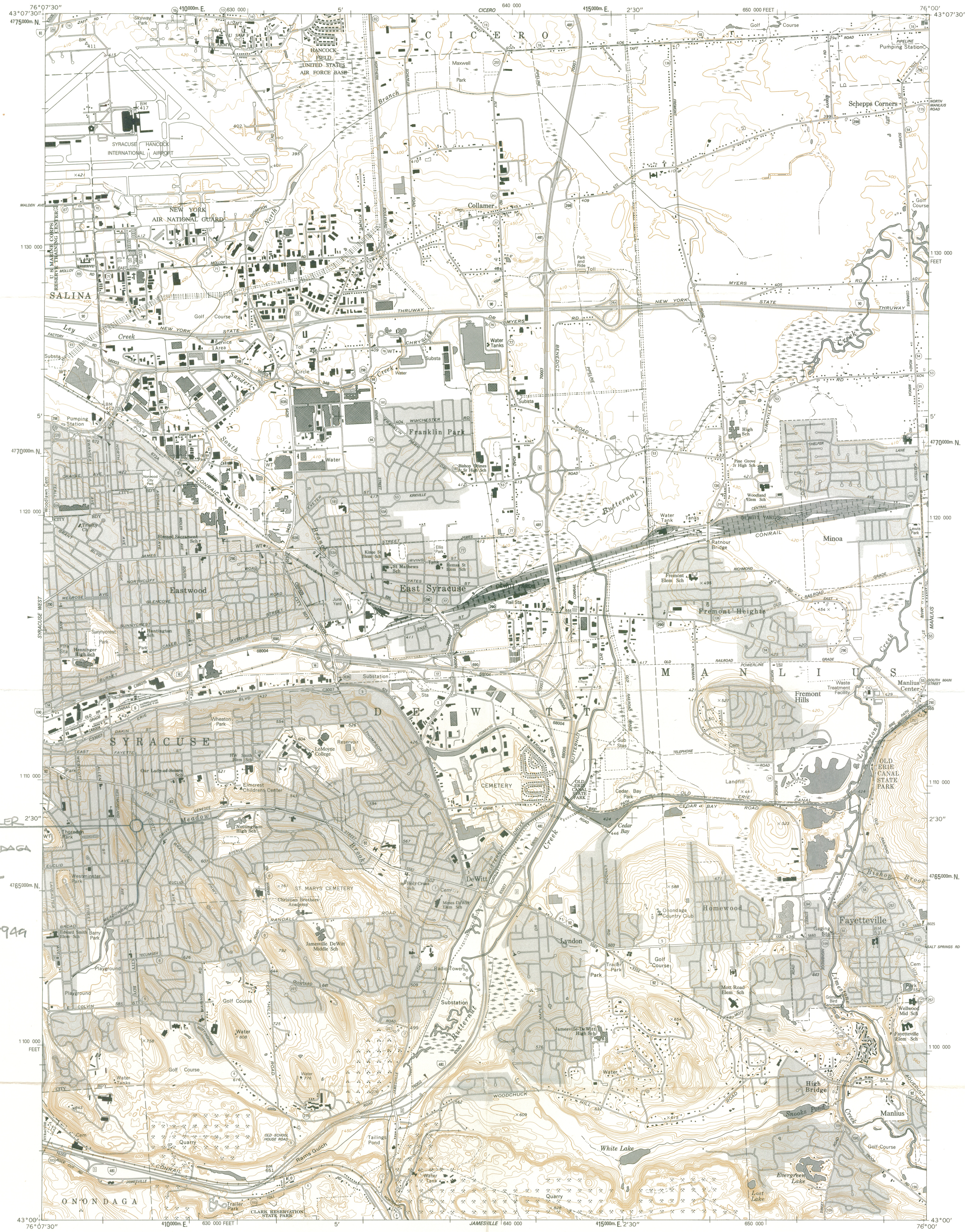


LOUIS + CELIA SKOLER RESIDENCE
SYRACUSE, ONONDAGA CO. N.Y.

PHOTO #14

NEW YORK STATE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

SYRACUSE EAST QUADRANGLE
NEW YORK – ONONDAGA CO
7.5 MINUTE SERIES


BREWERTON
CLEVELAND
76°07'30"
43°07'30"
76°00'
43°00'
4775000m. N.
4770000m. N.
4765000m. N.
410000m. E.
415000m. E.
630 000 FEET
640 000
650 000 FEET
1 130 000
1 120 000
1 110 000
1 100 000 FEET
2'30"
5'
CICERO
HANCOCK FIELD UNITED STATES AIR FORCE BASE
SYRACUSE HANCOCK INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
NEW YORK AIR NATIONAL GUARD
Collamer
Schepps Corners
SALINA
THRUWAY
Franklin Park
Eastwood
East Syracuse
Minoa
Fremont Heights
Fremont Hills
MANLIUS
Manlius Center
OLD ERIE CANAL STATE PARK
SYRACUSE
DEWITT
LeMoyne College
DeWitt
Lyndon
Homewood
Fayetteville
High Bridge
Manlius
White Lake
Evergreen Lake
Lost Lake
ONONDAGA
CLARK RESERVATION STATE PARK
JAMESVILLE
SOUTH ONONDAGA
ORAN

LOUIS + CELIA SKOLER
RESIDENCE
SYRACUSE, ONONDAGA
COUNTY, N.Y.
SYRACUSE EAST
QUAD
ZONE 18
409458 4765949

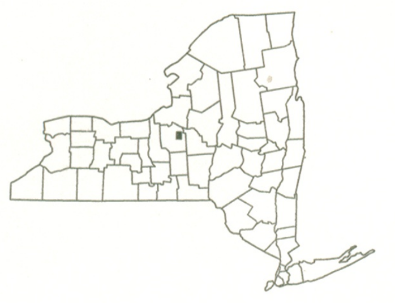
Published in 1990 by the New York State Department of Transportation, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration.

Map base from 1977 U.S. Geological Survey 7.5–minute quadrangle.

Map revisions made using aerial photography dated 1988, construction plans, official records and other sources. Features revised include: highways and other transportation facilities; civil boundaries; recreation sites; hydrography; and buildings. Gray tint indicates developed areas in which only landmark buildings are shown. Darker gray tint indicates open water features.

Revisions may not comply with National Map Accuracy Standards.

Correspondence concerning this and other maps of the Department of Transportation should be directed to: Map Information Unit, New York State Department of Transportation, State Campus, Albany, New York 12232.



QUADRANGLE LOCATION

SCALE 1:24 000

1 ½ 0 1 MILE
1000 0 1000 2000 3000 4000 5000 6000 7000 FEET
1 .5 0 1 KILOMETER

Transverse Mercator projection. 1927 North American Datum.
To place on the 1983 North American Datum move the projection lines
7 meters south and 29 meters west as shown by dashed corner ticks.

1000–meter ticks based on the New York Transverse Mercator grid.
Between 72° and 78° West Longitude, this grid is identical to Zone 18 of the Universal Transverse Mercator grid. Areas east of 72° and west of 78° are direct mathematical extensions of Zone 18.

10,000–foot ticks based on the New York State Plane Coordinate System, Central Zone.

Magnetic declination for 1990 is approximately 12.5° West

Contours, at 10–foot intervals, shown unrevised from 1977 U. S. Geological Survey map. Datum is mean sea level.

INDEX TO
1:9600 (1"=800')
MAP COVERAGE

SYRACUSE EAST (north)
SYRACUSE EAST (south)

BOUNDARIES:
State .... — — – – — — – –
County .... — – — – —
Town or City .... — — — — —
Incorporated Village .... – – – – – – – – – –
State / Federal Land .... — · — · —

ROADS:
Touring Route Markers:
Interstate 87
U. S. 20
State 36
County 54
State Highway number and limit 8020
County road 72
Interchange number 31

Divided:
Wide mall .... ═══
Narrow mall or barrier .... ═══
Undivided:
4 or more lanes .... ══
Less than 4 lanes .... ══
Vehicle track; trail .... - - - - - - -

SYRACUSE EAST QUADRANGLE
1990

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

Matthew J. Driscoll, Mayor

December 3, 2008

Mr. Anthony Apolka
New York State Department of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation
Peoples Island, P.O. 189
Waterford, New York 12188-0189

Dear Mr. Apolka:

I have received your letter concerning the designation of the property at 213 Scottholm Terrace. I have no objection to this designation and waive the 60-day comment period.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Matthew J. Driscoll
Mayor

203 CITY HALL • SYRACUSE, N.Y. 13202-1473 • (315) 448-8005 • FAX: (315) 448-8067
WEB PAGE: www.syracuse.ny.us

SYRACUSE
LANDMARK
PRESERVATION
BOARD

December 3, 2008

Mr. Anthony Opalka
National Register Program Analyst
New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau
Peebles Island
PO Box 189
Waterford, New York 12188-0189

RE: State and National Register nomination
Louis and Celia Skoler House
213 Scottholm Terrace

Dear Mr. Opalka:

In response to your letter dated November 21, 2008, I am pleased to submit this letter, on behalf of the Syracuse Landmark Preservation Board, agreeing to waive the right for a full 60-day comment period with respect to the nomination of the Louis and Celia Skoler House, located at 213 Scottholm Terrace, to the State and National Register of Historic Places. It especially pleases the Board that the property owners have made the effort to ensure that one of this City's historic assets receives its proper recognition. It should also be noted that this property has already been designated as a local protected site, an action which was also the result of the owners' initiative. Thank you for the opportunity to assist in expediting the nomination process.

Sincerely,

Donald S. Radke
Chairman

City Hall Commons, 201 E. Washington St., Rm. 412, Syracuse, New York 13202 / (315) 448-8730 / fax (315) 448-8720

OFFICE OF PARKS, RECREATION, HISTORIC PRESERVATION
NEW YORK STATE

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau • Peebles Island, PO Box 189, Waterford, New York 12188-0189
518-237-8643
www.nysparks.com

David A. Paterson
Governor

Carol Ash
Commissioner

RECEIVED 2280
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NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

December 23, 2009

Ms. Alexis Abernathy
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
1201 Eye St. NW
8th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20005

Re: Transmittal of National Register
Nominations

Dear Ms. Abernathy:

I am pleased to transmit four new National Register nominations to be considered for listing by the Keeper of the National Register as follows:

The Louis and Celia Skolar Residence, Syracuse, Onondaga Co., NY

Kingsway Jewish Center, Brooklyn, Kings Co., NY

Jewish Center of Kings Highway, Brooklyn, Kings Co., NY

Young Israel of Flatbush, Brooklyn, Kings Co., NY

Thank you for your assistance in processing these proposals. Please feel free to call on me at 518-237-8643 ext. 3258 if any questions arise.

Sincerely,

Mark L. Peckham
National Register
Program Coordinator

enclosures

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